

HIGGINS HERALD

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HIGGINS' Triumphant Return

USS HIGGINS (DDG 76) returned to her homeport after a successful and long Western Pacific deployment on November 8, 2005. Following the USS NIMITZ and USS PRINCETON, the HIGGINS manned the rails for the last leg of a triumphant deployment. The cool breeze off the water reminded the crew of San Diego's always-pleasant weather and sunny import days. Naval station tugs met HIGGINS' near Point Loma sending over flowers and the ship's wreath. The tugs then escorted her to Pier 10 with fire hoses creating a shower of water in front of the ship, announcing to the water front that HIGGINS' was home, and the job was finished. Cheers from the family could be heard from nearly a mile away and only grew louder as HIGGINS' approached her berth. Tugboats eased the deployment worn ship to the pier and the boatswains mates quickly sent over lines. The crowd erupted in excitement when the Bos'n Mate of the Watch passed the word "Moored, Shift Colors." The brow was attached, lines doubled up, and HIGGINS' crew was reunited with their dearly missed loved ones. USS HIGGINS' had returned and there was much to be proud of.



USS HIGGINS (DDG 76) returns to homeport San Diego.

Captain's Corner

HIGGINS Family and Friends,

By now you have all heard that HIGGINS has successfully returned from her six month Arabian Gulf/Western Pacific deployment. All of the training and preparations thoroughly paid off, as the crew demonstrated daily their ability to make the challenging look routine. A busy schedule and eight trips through the Strait of Hormuz helped to make the six months fly by exceedingly fast. In the final analysis, I could not be more proud of the crew's performance. The culminating event was our mooring pierside once again in San Diego, and there is no greater feeling than seeing all the families and friends that have provided so much support over the last several months waiting and cheering on the pier as we returned.

FC3 Robert Schaffer was the first to depart the ship as the "First Dad", as he was the first to have a child born during the deployment. The Ordnance Officer, ENS Sean Higginbotham, was next to depart the ship as his girlfriend had won the "First Kiss" raffle sponsored ashore by the HIGGINS' Family Support Group...get a room, please. Finally, having won the HIGGINS' "First Kiss" raffle, GSM2 Arturo Taylorpaz departed the ship and gave his young daughter a big "I missed you very much" kiss. After that the many long awaited reunions by the rest of the crew got underway.

Our last port visit before we departed Seventh Fleet was Phuket, Thailand. This area had been devastated by the tsunami of 2004 not even a year earlier, but by the time we arrived you could not tell anything had happened. The crew thoroughly enjoyed themselves and informed me that this was the best port visit of the deployment. It may be a close call, but I can't say that I disagree with them. If you are ever in Phuket, feel free to locate and sign the two HIGGINS life rings that mark our October 2005 visit.

After departing Phuket, we transited the Strait of Malacca and met up with King Neptune Rex and his right hand man, Davey Jones. They paid us a much needed visit to rid our ship of the rampant Pollywog infestation that had been plaguing us for the entire deployment. Neptune Rex was not all too thrilled about us transiting his domain with the multitude of landlubbers aboard who called themselves sailors of the sea. In the end, HIGGINS completed her cleansing and was allowed to proceed to Hawaii with a ship full of Shellbacks.

Before heading to San Diego, HIGGINS, in the company of the rest of the NIMITZ Carrier Strike Group, dropped by Hawaii for a four day port visit and a chance to pick up family and friends whom would ride us back to San Diego as part of our OPERATION TIGER CRUISE. During the Tiger Cruise, the Tigers got a chance to see many interesting operations such as an impressive air show from the carrier air wing, small arms firings, steel beach picnic, and an at-sea replenishment. For all their hard work and five days of training/fun, they were all awarding the coveted Tiger-Enlisted Surface Warfare Pin.

Also, this holiday season, HIGGINS was fortunate enough to be around in order to host a ship's Christmas Party. This year's party was held at the Sheraton Harbor Island, and I had no idea that the crew was that good looking. Many crew members also used this time to debut their custom made suits from either Hong Kong or Thailand...look, this is not the Player's Ball. The highlight of the evening was the raffling of many prizes and the well deserved Command Advancement of GSE2 Brian Dorsey.

Finally, much appreciation and thanks goes out to the USNA Class of '76 (who sponsor our ship) and TriWest Healthcare Alliance for their thoughtful and spirit filled donation of Poinsettia Bowl football tickets to the crew of HIGGINS. The donation was so substantial that not only did all of the HIGGINS crew members get taken care of, but so did many sailors from the other ships in our squadron and the staff as well. All allowing the twelfth man to help lead Navy to a huge victory. BZ and thanks a million!

Farewell to LTJG Dave Teves, our most excellent former newsletter editor, and hail to our new editors, ENS Tiana Tafua and ENS Rob Inman.

Look for our next issue to hit the streets sometime in late April.

V/r,
Jesse Wilson

WOG Day!



**A row of WOG'S peering into the depths of
Nentune's domain**



Two unsuspecting WOG's pre-festivities



King Neptune address the WOG's



Polywog infestation



**CDR Wilson views his infested domain, as
the entire crew becomes Shellbacks!**

Phuket, Thailand



BM2 Garret, BM3 Brazel, YN2 White, CTR1 Johansen, and HM1 Biggs practicing their water ballet skills

After the excitement of the Malabar Exercise with the Indian Navy, HIGGINS' crewmembers were fortunate enough to enjoy their well earned liberty in Phuket, Thailand. It was less than a year ago that the devastation of the tsunami visited Phuket, yet the beauty of Thailand and the spirit of its people was undiminished. The deliciously spicy Thai cuisine, lovely beaches, and friendly locals made this an unforgettable visit.



CTO1 Christensen and GM2 Reese with their Muaythai bodyguard



COMREL project volunteers



HIGGINS' crewmembers preparing for the Go-Kart Speed Racer finals



IT2 Dague making contact with the local wildlife

HAWAII

In the early morning hours of October 30, 2005 the Hawaiian Islands appeared on HIGGINS' horizon. The sweet smell of Hawaii blew across the water as HIGGINS' crew was ready their last liberty port of Westpac 2005. Enjoying the festivities of a Hawaiian Halloween as well, HIGGINS' enjoyed a quick stop before taking on Tigers and heading home.



Hawaiian Sunrise off Diamond Head, Oahu



GM2 Baldo with the USS Arizona Memorial in the background

Around the Ship



On Saturday, December 11, 2005, seven HIGGINS sailors traveled to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar to run the annual USO Toys for Tots 5K race. Pictured top row L to R is OS3 John Wainwright, ENS Rick Slye, ENS Robert Inman, BM3 Ryan Brazel; Bottom Row L to R is GM2 Luigi Baldo, OS3 Mark Magtira, and OS3 Mathew Durdock.

CONGRATULATIONS to our newest ESWS qualified members

SK3 Borlagdon

FC3 Buck

STG3 Canfield

FC3 Davis

ET1 Hancock

ITSN Iribe

IT3 Jones

GSM2 Lobo

IC2 Maldonado

QM2 MacEvoy

MR2 Patton

FC3 Pellman

EN1 Perez

OS3 Rogers

IT3 Spicer

STG2 Stafford

FC3 Stripling

FC3 Tammillo

OS2 Vandunk

SN YoungCornelius

TIGER CRUISE

For the final leg of our journey, family members of HIGGINS joined us to get a taste of life underway. They slept in berthing, ate Navy chow, and found out if they really do get seasick. While onboard they participated in the Tiger ESWS program, a qualification process where they learned about the ship and its capabilities. Included in their activities were gun demonstrations, replenishment at sea, and an impressive air show by USS NIMITZ. It was a wonderful opportunity for HIGGINS crew members to show off their hard work to family and friends.



**IT3 Jones and his brother
Colby**



The junior section of our Tigers



**IC3 Swanson with his father
Jeffrey**



FC1 Ferguson and his son Christopher



Is that land up ahead?



**GSM2 Taylorpaz with
his son Brandon**



STG2 Canfield with her father Will



**YN1 Romes with her
father Mike**

Christmas Party



DCFN Perez



**IT2 Dague, OS3 Wainwright, and
STG3 Nowicki with his date**

On December 2, 2005
HIGGINS crew members
enjoyed a lovely evening at the
Sheraton Harbor Island Hotel to
celebrate the Christmas season.
Along with the good food and
music were some great prizes
and for GSE2 Dorsey, the best
prize of being “CAP’d” by the
CO to Petty Officer 2nd class.
Overall, the evening was a huge
success and enjoyed by all.



**DC3 Makuwa, QM3 Hall and YN3 Brown
dressed to impress**



**“Night CAP” - GSE3 Dorsey receiving his
promotion to GSE2 as part of the Command
Advancement Program (CAP)**



IC1 Anderson and his wife



**GSMFN Williams and QM2
Nas striking a pose**



**LT Smith and his wife
dressed to the nines**

Christmas Party Couples



HT1 Fury and his wife Sandra



FCC Belbeck and his fiancée Stephanie



SN Newman and his wife



CTRC Gentile and his fiancée Shannon



DCC Phillips and his wife Cheryl



FCCS Pettit and his wife Dalyn